

The Dragon Born of Man

by fuzzykitty01

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Adventure, Family

Language: English

Characters: Astrid, Hiccup, Stoick, Toothless

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-05-20 20:14:51

Updated: 2014-12-10 11:37:15

Packaged: 2016-04-26 18:48:00

Rating: T

Chapters: 6

Words: 10,445

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Hiccup is cast out to sea as a baby because he's a runt, and found by tidal class dragons. They take him in and raise him, but humans can't breathe underwater, so they had to change him. They gave him fins and gills, but Hiccup's still able to walk among the humans. Hiccup's an amphibious mix of man and dragon. That's gonna cause some problems when he stumbles across Berk later.

1. Prologue: Cast Away

****A/N: **OMG I am such an idiot. Apparently I saved this wrong so it came out looking like a bunch of coding and weirdness. ;u; *smacks self* I'm sorry about that! Maybe this looks better?**

* * *

><p>The night was still and silent save for the hungry squalling of a baby. Stoick the Vast stood tall but rigid as he tucked his young son's blankets tighter around him. No, not his son. Stoick had to remind himself that Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III was just thatâ€”a Hiccup. Only the strong can belong on Berk and the tiny squirming baby in Stoick's arms was not strong.<p>

He nodded somberly at the village elder and handed the hiccup over to her. She frowned at the Berk Crest embroidered on the blankets, but Stoick couldn't bring himself to send the hiccup off without them. Valka had insisted on it; citing that they owed their son that much at least. The stubborn woman wouldn't allow herself to think of the hiccup as anything but her child. Stoick wished he was strong enough to think that way too.

The elder gave the hiccup his last rites in silence. She tucked a sprig of holly into the blankets and looked up at Stoick to see if he wanted to say goodbye. He didn't.

With a heavy sigh, the old woman placed the bundle into a small boat

and shipped it off. The baby's cries carried on until he was too far away to be heard. Stoick hoped those awful sounds wouldn't haunt him in the night. He lingered a bit longer than was necessary before turning on his heel and marching back home.

The baby, meanwhile, had gone silent. The boat rocked him gently on calm waters and pacified the hunger pains in his belly. Hiccup cooed and tried to reach for the stars twinkling high above his head. The pretty lights enchanted the wide-eyed infant. Down below the ocean's surface, a serpentine eye blinked open.

A Scauldron had caught the scent of human and wood. Such scents usually preceded a haul of fish ripe for snatching. The dragon uncurled from her sleepy coil and slithered towards the surface. She was confused when she didn't find a large fishing boat when she broke the surface, but instead a tiny coffin-sized raft. The Scauldron snorted in disappointment; it was just another funeral boat that failed to catch fire. That happened sometimes. The dragon was about to submerge herself back under water, but a warbling coo coming from the boat caught her attention.

Curiously, the Scauldron swam closer to the boat to see what was inside. A squishy pink thing with eyes like seaglass stared back at her. A baby! The Scauldron realized. A human baby! What was it doing all the way out here without it's pack? And why did it smell sick and hungry?

The baby giggled and gurgled cutely as he tried to reach for the pretty green lady in front of him. He knew it was a lady because his mommy was a lady and this lady looked like her a little. Hiccup's tummy hurt and his feet were cold, but he didn't mind so much when he was distracted by such wonderful things! The lady lowered her nose closer to him and seemed surprised when Hiccup's chubby fingers only went to pet her.

Odd, the Scauldron thought. Usually humans were more violent than thisâ€”even the smaller onesâ€”but this one was content just to play with her snout. The dragon took the opportunity to get a better feel for the baby's scent. She snuffled the mop of brown fur on top of his head and rumbled angrily. The babe wasn't even a day old and he smelled empty. He'd obviously been out at sea the whole nightâ€”that was the only other thing the dragon could smell on his tiny formâ€”so why didn't he have food in his belly? The dragon hazarded a guess and figured the boy's pack had left him to die. That happened sometimes tooâ€”not often, but every once in a while she'd come across the bloated remains of drowned babies cast out to sea. The Scauldron felt lucky she'd caught this one in time. But what to do with him?

Well first things first, the baby needed to be fed. The Scauldron still had some fish left in her stomach from her last meal, so she coughed it up and fed it to the child.

Hiccup's face scrunched up from the strange taste in his mouth, but his tummy wanted it so he didn't complain too much. Already he felt so much better and ready to play! But the pretty lady in front of him wouldn't let him touch her nose again. Instead, she rumbled like his tummy was doing not too long ago. Was she hungry too? Hiccup didn't mean to make the lady's tummy hurt! His face scrunched up and he started to fuss.

The dragon didn't know what she did to set the boy off. He started squirming and fussing as soon as she started growling, and she didn't know why. The Scauldron stopped growling and almost immediately, the babe quieted down. She blinked and regarded the boy with curiosity. She growled again and the baby started crying again. She stopped and he stopped. How cute! The babe thought she was hungry! The Scauldron lowered her head to nuzzle the boy and growled again to show him all was well. The baby seemed fascinated.

As adorable as the whole thing was, the Scauldron still had a problem. She didn't want to take the human back to his pack if they were only going to throw him back to sea, but humans couldn't live in the sea. They needed gills just to breathe and fins to move around properlyâ€”wait. That's it! That's what she could do with him! The Scauldron had nearly forgotten about the magic she'd been gifted with that could make her human more suited for the sea. She couldn't turn him into a dragonâ€”oh no! That was far too complicated for her to pull off, but she could give him gills and finsâ€”perhaps even scales and webbing! Oh it was perfect! The Scauldron gathered her magic without further ado, and let it siphon into the child.

Hiccup felt weird. His neck was itchy and so were his arms and legs! He started to fuss again, but he didn't think he had enough tears to start crying anymore. Hiccup wiggled uncomfortably and went to stuff his fist in his mouth, but it felt different. Hiccup whimpered and looked down at his hand to see what was wrong, but instantly brightened when he saw his hand was now the same pretty green as the lady! He gave the lady a gummy grin and reached out with chubby webbed hands for her to pick him up. She did so and let him ride her neck! How fun! The lady growled again, but this time Hiccup knew it wasn't because her tummy hurt, and sank down into the water. Hiccup wasn't old enough to know that he shouldn't have been able to breathe.

2. Chapter 1: Curiosity

A green and gold blur darted through the coral reef with practiced ease. It was searching for something; gliding to and fro between the bright colored reefs. The glittering green figure slowed down when it found what it was looking for. A small human boy with coppery brown hair and wide eyes the color of sea glass grinned triumphantly when he spotted a matured oyster. The boy, who could now be seen to have bright green scales and webbed fingers and toes, scooped up the oyster and swam back to his school. His mother was waiting for him.

"Mother, look what I found!" The boy trilled with an unearthly lilt to his voice. The boy's motherâ€”a Scauldron with the same bright green scales as her sonâ€”peered curiously at his find before blowing a stream of bubbles toward him. The boy giggled and blew a much smaller group of bubbles back at her.

"I see you've found yet another oyster, dear Hiccup!" Skuldra rumbled in a language no human could understand save for the boy. "I wonder how long it will take for it to open up." She mused.

Hiccup grinned up at her and started rambling excitedly. "It looks just about ready to pop! How big do you think the pearl will be, mother? If it's big enough, I can go up to the surface to trade it

for some silver! Or maybe gold! Gold is always nice, but so expensive!" He finished his small rant with a pout. Skuldra chuckled and nuzzled the top of Hiccup's head.

"Whatever you bring back will be beautiful. You always have had a keen eye for it, my son." She praised him. "Just don't get into too much trouble with the humans. Last time you nearly lost your hand."

"How was I supposed to know just looking at something could be considered thievery?" Hiccup pouted. "I had to make sure my purchase was a fair one! Humans can talk all sorts of pretty words until lead seems like gold to those who don't know any better!" He defended with a huff.

"I am your mother. It is my job to worry." Skuldra rumbled affectionately. She snuffled Hiccup's hair again; blinking innocently at him when he yelped indignantly.

"Mother~!" He whined, "You're making me look like a guppy!" He looked over at the other dragons his age and pouted when they tittered mockingly in his direction. Skuldra hissed at the immature pack of adolescents and they scattered faster than minnows in the path of a shark. She nodded triumphantly and looked back over to Hiccup, who was still pouting.

"You'll always be my guppy." Skuldra reminded him. Hiccup's sulking face only soured more. Skuldra laughed and blew bubbles into Hiccup's hair. Hiccup couldn't help the playful giggle that escaped him.

"There's that smile I love so much!" Skuldra cheered with a small grin of her own, "Now then, Go tend to your oyster, and maybe you'll have a nice big pearl to trade with." She nudged him along. Hiccup's childish ire was forgotten in the face of his earlier goal. His grin returned full force and he wrapped his tiny human arms around his mother's snout. Skuldra allowed herself a moment of nostalgia for when those arms were smaller still and still chubby with baby fat. Human children grew up fast—or maybe that was all children that did that? Who knows? Skuldra sighed fondly against her young human and nuzzled his hair once again. This time Hiccup allowed it with a boyish grin.

"I still don't know why you have such a fascination with humans." She hummed thoughtfully. Well, Skuldra did have a pretty good idea, and the blank look Hiccup gave her in return told her she wasn't too far off.

"I'm still technically human, mother." Hiccup sighed; rolling his eyes just a bit. Bah! Teenagers and their disrespect! "Though I see myself more as a dragon. Humans are fun, but only in short spurts. My home is down here with you and the rest of our school!" He finished with a loving smile as he looked out at the ragtag school of miscellaneous tidal class dragons. There were Scauldrons, of course, but there were also Seashockers, Thunderdrums, and a few Sharkworms making up their strange pack. Hiccup knew every single one of them by name and they've been his family since before he could remember. Skuldra's smile softened as she watched her son look upon his school with such affection. Perhaps teenagers weren't such disrespectful creatures after all, she mused with a snort.

"Yes, well," She relented with a reluctant huff, "You won't be seeing much of your 'fun humans' if you don't watch that oyster! Go on, scoot! Don't forget to give it a nice sprinkle of sand!" Skuldra called after Hiccup in a motherly fashion.

Sometimes she wondered if she should limit Hiccup's time up on the surface, but then she remembered how stubborn her little boy could be. One time Skuldra had forbidden him from hunting with the packâ€”citing how he wouldn't be able to do much with his blunted teeth and tiny clawsâ€”but Hiccup not only disobeyed her and went with them anyway, he came back with the biggest haul Skuldra had ever seen! Hiccup bore his punishment gracefully; content in the knowledge that he'd proven himself a capable hunter. Skuldra had been hard-pressed to expressly forbid him from doing anything ever again. Hiccup could handle himself, Skuldra reminded herself daily. She just couldn't let go of all the 'what ifs' and worst-case scenarios that could possibly happen to her little boy.

Skuldra huffed and went back to her nap. She was definitely a mother, she decided with a wry smile. Only they would worry this much over what-ifs.

3. Chapter 2: Cast the Nets

Hiccup grinned excitedly as he swam to his little space within the school. He placed the oyster on a rock shelf with all of his other trinkets. Hiccup couldn't wait until it opened up! It would be a while, but at least Hiccup knew it was there waiting for him when it did.

Hiccup's smile dimmed into a curious frown when a large shadow fell over him. He looked up and saw the silhouette of a Fishing Boat gliding across the surface. (He'd learned to spot the differences between all sorts of ships over the years) Hiccup's grin came back and he kicked off the sandy floor to swim up to the surface. The other dragons watched him carefully; knowing that Hiccup was the best choice to check things out on the surface, but still cautious of losing their favorite human. If Hiccup was spotted on the surface, it wouldn't cause a panic, but it was always good to be careful.

Hiccup broke the surface with a generous gulp of air. His blue and green scales melded back into his human skin. The seaweed in his hair shriveled up and fell into the sea as foam. Every part of Hiccup that broke the surface turned pink and soft like a human should be. Hiccup was unique among his school for being born human, it allowed him to blend in with his birth kin while still being able to return to the sea whenever it pleased him. Hiccup looked around with curiosity shining in his wide, not-quite-human eyes. He spotted the ship with a triumphant grin and swam up to the hull. Hiccup tested the wood to see how slippery it was before climbing up the side. He'd gotten quite good at ambling up slippery surfaces over the years.

Before he could get very far, a net descended over his head! Hiccup screamed and flailed around in the net. It only tangled him up more and made him fall back down into the ocean. Hiccup took a deep breath of seawater and tried to scream for help. The net was heaved up before he could. Hiccup's heart beat rapidly in his chest as he tried to calm his terror. The humans had him in their clutches and Hiccup

knew the fate of anyone caught in their snares.

Hiccup was dumped onto the deck like a graceless cod. He was cut loose and hauled onto his feet by a big, hairy man. The man's eyes were narrow and mean as he shouted at Hiccup. Hiccup may have known a variety of human languages, but he was having a hard time keeping up through his panic.

"Oh for the love oâ€"I think we got a daft one, boys! Prolly shipwrecked or somethin'!" Hiccup managed to catch that much before he was thrown back down onto the deck.

A sharp, silver blade was pressed against his neck and Hiccup let out an ear-shattering shriek. The crew all dropped what they had and clamped their hands over their ears. Glass trinkets exploded and showered the humans in glittering shrapnel. Wine bottles broke and stained the wooden deck red. Blood dribbled from a few unfortunate men's ears and Hiccup felt guilty for blowing out their eardrums.

Hiccup had learned that little trick from the Thunderdrum called Nimahk. The old dragon was crude, but efficient when it came to teaching Hiccup the ways of a dragon. Hiccup's scream wasn't anywhere near Nimahk's level of power, but he didn't need to kill a man at close range. He just needed to stun them.

Unfortunately, Hiccup couldn't scream forever. His throat burned just as badly as the fishermen's ears must have been. Hiccup's voice cracked then was lost to the western winds. He stared up at the groaning, angry men with fear swimming in his eyes. Hiccup quivered and tried to scramble backwards, but a meaty hand shot out to grab his ankle. Hiccup squeaked in shock and the man growled at him.

"The fuck was tha'?" He snarled as he dragged Hiccup back by the ankle, "What manner o' spell didja cast on us, witch?"

Hiccup's jaw quivered as his terror struck him dumb. The man didn't look like he was about to ask any more questions, either. With a twisted snarl, the Viking brought down an ax with the intention of splitting open Hiccup's head. Hiccup screamedâ€"not nearly as loud as beforeâ€"and threw his soft, pink arms over his unprotected head.

He expected to be dead when he opened his eyes, but instead a shrill cry of "NIGHTFURY!" rang through the ship. A shrieking cry that sounded like the wind-walking kin was all the warning Hiccup received before a purple blast of plasma shot through the deck. The ax was knocked from the Viking's grip and Hiccup gratefully took the convenient distraction. He leaped over the starboard bow and returned to the sea with open arms.

Hiccup saw fire and blood drip down into the water after him. It would've been horrifying if Hiccup wasn't a seasoned hunter. Like a shark circling a wounded seal, Hiccup picked off the few men who managed to live through the blast. They all looked upon his hissing, green, scale-covered face and trembled in the face of their watery death.

When every last one of the Vikings were deadâ€"as was his rightâ€"Hiccup once again broke the surface. The wind-walking kin was still circling the skies as if waiting for something. That something

must've been him, because the Nightfury swooped down on some near-by rocks and looked to him with a curious croon. Knowing that it would be rude not to thank the wind-walking kin for his help, Hiccup swam over to the rocks as well.

For a moment, they just stared at each other. The Night's Fury looked Hiccup up and down and took in the strange human-that-smelled-of-fish-faring-kin with a curious eye. Hiccup did the same to the Nightfury.

"You are not a dragon, but you're not enemy or prey, either." The Nightfury spoke in that age-old language all dragons knew. Hiccup nodded once and smiled thinly at the Nightfury. His too-big teeth glittered like pearls as he spoke the same language.

"I am Hiccup." He answered with a shrug, "There's no other way to explain what I am. I am what I am and I am Hiccup."

The Nightfury reeled back in shock. He hadn't expected the little not-dragon to _speak_!

"You're a funny little Hiccup." The Nightfury spoke with an amused huff, "I am the Night's Fury, the unholy offspring of Hella and Thor, He who cuts the sky and never misses his prey!"

Hiccup's grin widened into something more friendly as he realized the Night's Fury was extending a wing in friendship. He puffed out his scaly chest and boasted his own titles.

"I am Hiccup, dragon born of man, he who was cast out to the sea to die but lived, fledgling of Calypso and Hecate, but son of Skuldra." He said in clear whistles and airy clicks. Toothless was impressed, even a bit giddy, as he asked,

"Would you like to be friend to the Night's Fury, Dragon Born of Man?"

Hiccup had no reason to say no. It might even be fun!

4. Chapter 3: Happy Birthday

"Woohoo~!" Hiccup whooped joyfully as he plummeted down to the sea from 100 feet in the air. Most people would have panicked, but not Hiccup. You see, not only was his natural habitat beneath the roiling waves of saltwater, but he had a friend flying through the sky that would catch him before he hit the water.

"Toothless!" Hiccup called out in a rumbling croon. The Nightfury Hiccup befriended so many years ago swooped down to catch Hiccup in his hind claws. The dragon boy was twenty now; old enough to be called a man in human society. Toothless would always snort and say he's still a hatchling in his eyes whenever Hiccup brought it up.

"How many times have I told you not to call me that?" Toothless griped sourly. Hiccup grinned innocently up at him and Toothless rolled his eyes. Hiccup laughed at his friend's dower pout and patted his leg.

"I'm sure there are less stars in the sky than times you've told me not to call you Toothless." Hiccup replied cheekily before yelping in surprise. Toothless had dropped him and let Hiccup fall into the sea. It was only a 10 foot drop this time, so Hiccup was unharmed when he came up for air. It was Hiccup's turn to pout and Toothless' time to laugh hysterically. Hiccup looked like a drowned cat with seaweed caught in his hair.

"Don't look at me like that!" Toothless cackled as Hiccup swam to the near by rocks that jutted above the surface, "This should teach you not to call me such an undignified name!"

Hiccup stuck his tongue out at the winged beast; a human trait he'd picked up on one of his trips to shore. He wrung out his hair before shaking his head like a dog.

"Oh stop that! You know I was just teasing!" Toothless wheedled Hiccup as he plopped his wide, flat head in his lap. Hiccup tried to keep a straight face, but ended up giggling at his friend's dramatics.

"So was I, you useless reptile!" Hiccup chuckled as he scratched Toothless' chin, "Besides, all of your other titles are too long and tedious to say aloud! What, should I shout 'Night's Fury, Offspring of Hela and Thor, Cutter of the Sky and Bringer of Storms when you drop me from high up in the air?' Hiccup raised his brow and smirked knowingly at Toothless.

"Well noâ€|" Toothless pouted; realizing the impracticality of his real name, "â€|but _Toothless_?" Hiccup giggled again and Toothless growled.

"Well your teeth retract and it's a very misleading name! Your enemies will think you have no teeth and suddenly 'CHOMP!' you've got your fangs digging into their flesh!" Hiccup punctuated his morbid picture by snapping his jaws with a toothy grin.

"Fine! I see your point." Toothless relented with a huff, "I'll just call _you_ a funny name, see how you like it!" He decided.

Hiccup rolled his eyes as Toothless thought up some horrible name to call him. Hiccup rolled lazily onto his back and resolved himself for a very long wait. Toothless was very cunning and quick on his feet, but _creative_ was not a word Hiccup would use to describe his friend. That was his job.

"Slugâ€|? No that's too gross even for me. Egghead? No, that's one of the hatchling's namesâ€|" Hiccup snorted and felt sorry for the poor hatchling, "I know! I'll call you Chum!" Toothless grinned wickedly as Hiccup shot up with an indignant scowl.

"You will not!" He growled, "I swear, Toothless, if you call me such a disgusting nameâ€|!" _
>

"You'lll _what_? Oh Chummy Chum of mine?" Toothless challenged with a triumphant grin on his face.

Hiccup hissed and lunged for Toothless's unguarded front. Toothless was shocked that such a stupid name could make Hiccup fly into a rage

like that. Still, Toothless would not stand idle while he was attacked. His serpentine eyes narrowed into dangerous slits and his teeth slid into place. He tackled Hiccup and pinned his wriggling form down with his bulk. Toothless bared his teeth but did not attack as he hissed,

"What's gotten into you?"

"Do you even know what chum is?" Hiccup snarled as he continued to thrash around in Toothless' grip, "It's fish guts! The humans use it to attract bigger, better fish and even dragons sometimes get fooled by the scent of blood in the water!"

Toothless paused and considered Hiccup's words. He didn't know the humans used chum to lure dragons into their nets, just the bigger fish. Now that he knew, he could see why Hiccup would be upset with the nickname. If Hiccup started answering to 'Chum,' he would essentially be saying he was dragon bait.

"Oh." Toothless said dumbly, "No I didn't, actually. I'm sorry."

He lifted his front talons off of Hiccup's chest and sat back on his hind legs. Toothless widened his big, green eyes apologetically and started to croon. He sought Hiccup's eyes out with his own and gave him a gummy grin when Hiccup finally looked at him. Hiccup regarded Toothless for a moment before snorting. He smiled back and giggled a bit.

"It is forgiven, you overgrown lizard." Hiccup snorted with a small grin.

Toothless let out a soft crow of triumph and flopped backwards to bare his belly. He started writhing around on the rocks like a cat scratching an itch. Hiccup's smile widened and he ambled onto Toothless' belly to hug his friend and settle down for a quick nap. They both rested in the afternoon sun for a while; simply content to be.

Seagulls cawed overhead. The waves crashed against the rocks and licked their scales playfully. The scent of saltwater was left behind in their wake. A small pack of Terrible Terrors soared around and picked off the hapless gulls one by one. The sun beat down on the odd pair and if Hiccup were more human, he'd have gotten a tan.

Hiccup's eyes blinked open lazily as a thought came to him. He stretched out on Toothless' belly and grinned with growing excitement. Toothless cocked his head to the side like a confused parrot and let out a questioning croon.

"Mother says she has a surprise for me." Hiccup explained giddily, "For my birthday!"

Toothless blinked and let out a wry chuckle.

"Knowing Skuldra, it'll probably be more chores for you, since you're 'of age.'" Hiccup could hear the quotation marks when Toothless said "of age." He pouted and stuck his tongue out at the dragon before plopping his head on his crossed forearms.

"Jerk." He muttered goodnaturedly.

"But really, what do you think she got you this year?" Toothless asked as Hiccup's excitement finally rubbed off on him.

"I don't know! It could be anything! She says she'll give it to me when you've left for the raid!" Hiccup's mood soured at the thought of Toothless going somewhere he couldn't follow. Toothless growled softly as he thought about the Red Queen's hold on him. He sighed in resignation and chinned his little Hiccup.

"I'll be on Berk this time. Big rocks, a hoard of screaming Vikings, can't miss it." Toothless informed him. He always told Hiccup where he would be during raids so that he wouldn't worry as much. Hiccup had gotten it into his head that if he couldn't go with Toothless himself, he would at least know where to direct his fury if he never came back. Hiccup gave Toothless a deadpan look and said,

"There are thousands of islands like that, my friend. You'll have to be more specific."

Toothless let out a bellowing laugh; something he'd learned to do from watching Hiccup. He opened his mouth to explain what Berk looked like in better detail, but then a ship sailed by. Toothless ducked down and used his pitch black scales to blend in with the rocks. Hiccup burrowed under Toothless so his bright green scales wouldn't be seen.

"Well if you want to know where Berk is!" Toothless muttered ruefully, "Follow the ships with that picture on the sails."

Hiccup craned his neck so he could get a better look. Berk's ships were large and well-fortified. Hiccup could see dozens of dings and scrapes in the hull, but none of them went all the way through. The sails were like war banners for a returning army; large and proud to bear the house sigil. Berk's crest was a dragon speared through the snout with a sword. Hiccup shuddered and raised a hand to trace his face.

The crest looked oddly familiar.

"You should go home now, Hiccup." Toothless whispered cautiously in Hiccup's ear, "Things are about to get ugly, soon. I'll meet you back here on the morrow. Maybe."

Hiccup gulped and nodded. When the ship passed and sailed out of sight, Hiccup dove back into the sea and swam back to the safety of his school.

Skuldra greeted her son with a soft stream of bubbles. Hiccup did the same, though his were less enthusiastic. Skuldra crooned worriedly at Hiccup, and he told her what he saw.

"If the warriors are back, then the raid will be bloody." Skuldra said with a knowing look. Hiccup was worried for his sky walking friend. It was a sad thing to see her hatchling so distressed on his birthday, but Skuldra couldn't blame him. The Red Queen cared little for her subjects; let alone their happiness. No one dared disobey her once they were ensnared in her nest. If the Red Queen called, you answered. Period. Even if you died.

"The Night's Fury will be fine, my son." Skuldra consoled him, "He never misses, remember? And no human has ever seen him without meeting a swift end."

"There is always a first time, mother." Hiccup fretted solemnly. Skuldra scoffed and swatted Hiccup with her wing. He yelped indignantly, but held his tongue when Skuldra gave him that look mothers always seemed to have.

"No more of this! It's your birthday and here you are worrying over 'what ifs' and things that haven't happened! Be happy today or so help me I'll stick you with the guppies!" Skuldra scolded him with a warm, motherly smile at the end. Hiccup giggled and scratched the back of his head.

"You're right. I'm being silly." He agreed sheepishly.

"Yes, you are." Skuldra snorted fondly, "But no more of that! I promised you a surprise, didn't I?"

Hiccup's mood instantly brightened. He grinned and darted to and fro like an excited puppy as Skuldra dragged out a small chest from beneath the rocks. It was a curious human tradition Hiccup observed one time. The humans would put their gifts in a box before they gave it to someone. It prolonged the suspense and the school found they liked that a lot. Skuldra pushed the chest towards Hiccup with her nose and he practically attacked it in all the excitement.

Hiccup tore away the rusted lock by smashing it with a rock. He unlatched the sides and paused for dramatic effect. Skuldra barked at him to get it over with already, and Hiccup did so with a laugh. He slowly opened the chest and blinked curiously into the contents it held.

"It's a blanket?" Hiccup asked as he gingerly raised it from the chest. It was small, and faded with time and seasalt, but Hiccup could definitely see the outline of a family crest. There was a sword and something else he couldn't make out. Hiccup gulped and looked to his mother for an explanation.

"You were wrapped up in that when I made you mine." She told him softly, "Your human family must've left you with a small courtesy, because they don't usually leave their family crest on the children they mean to kill."

Hiccup regarded the blanket with a mix of feelings. He was angry, of course. His human family left him to die, who wouldn't be resentful of that? But there was also curiosity tugging at his heart. Hiccup wanted to know why they would leave him with a small part of their family if they were intending to kill him anyway? Humans, especially Vikings, took their sense of togetherness seriously. Surely they must have wanted Hiccup to be a part of them if they left him with his family crest, right? But then there was the guilt. Skuldra raised him despite all the barriers that should've kept them apart. She was Hiccup's mother and the school was his family. How could he want to learn more about the human family that abandoned him when his dragon family was there for him through thick and thin?

"You are my son, Hiccup, never forget that. I just thought you would

like to know where you came from, now that you're of age in human terms." Skuldra assured him. She wrapped her wings around Hiccup and drew him in close. Hiccup buried his face in her scales and Skuldra laid her head on Hiccup's. Skuldra crooned gently and held Hiccup as he sorted through his tumultuous feelings.

"Thank you, mother." Hiccup breathed as he leaned into her touch. Skuldra crooned.

5. Chapter 4: The Search Begins

Hiccup kicked his feet anxiously as he waited on the rocks. The first day with no sign of Toothless wasn't cause for much worry. The Night's Fury sometimes had to go for a long flight alone to gather his thoughts after a raid. Hiccup could understand that, so he didn't begrudge Toothless whenever he was late meeting up with him. The second day was a little more worrying, but still not a cause for alarm. Perhaps Toothless was hunting for himself and his quarry was sneaky enough to elude his capture? Hiccup doubted it, but he didn't want to think about the bleak alternative.

This was the third day since the raid, and Hiccup was starting to panic. He shifted often; his body itched uncomfortably with the nagging feeling prickling at his senses. His eyes darted around frantically as he searched for any hint of black wings against the clouds. The waves lapped up against the rocks and tickled Hiccup's feet lovingly, but the ocean didn't calm him as it normally would.

Hiccup pulled out the blanket he got for his birthday from his mother. He thumbed the waterlogged fabric thoughtfully and wondered what that faded out part of the picture was. Hiccup squinted his eyes and thought he could make out the beginnings of a snout, but then he blinked and it was gone. Hiccup sighed in frustration and went back to scanning the skies for his friend.

"Where are you, you useless reptile?" Hiccup muttered to himself without any real heat, "You couldn't possibly have been killed, could you? No man has ever seen you and lived to tell the tale, you never miss your target, and you certainly wouldn't let some overgrown yak take you down, so where have you gone?" The more Hiccup talked to himself, the more the niggling feeling that something was wrong began to grow. Hiccup stood abruptly, not at all hindered by the slippery slope of the rocks, and turned towards the direction of Berk. Toothless said that's where the raid would take place, so that's a good place to start his search. His mind made up, Hiccup dove back into the sea and swam to Berk.

It was a good thing Hiccup made that decision, because Toothless was trapped and unable to move, let alone hunt. He'd been shot down by a bola of all things! Toothless had no idea Vikings could throw that high, but apparently they've managed to evolve just enough to do it. Toothless snorted and thought. It was about time, too. Humans could be so resistant to change it was ridiculous! Nevertheless, Toothless was downed, bound, and slowly starving to death. A downed dragon was a dead dragon, and if Hiccup didn't reach him soon, Toothless would be a very dead dragon.

Bushes rustled nearby and Toothless stilled with a primal,

instinctive fear he'd never thought he'd experience. He was prey trapped and waiting for a predator to find him. If he was lucky, the predator would simply kill him and eat him. Unfortunately, the more likely outcome would be a Viking cutting off his head and wings and mounting them on their wall as a trophy. Toothless' breathing quickened even as he laid ramrod straight with his eyes darting around every which way. His heart hammered in his chest and flooded his ears with the sound of rushing blood.

The foliage parted to reveal it was nothing more than a rabbit rustling the bushes. Toothless sagged with relief and calmed his thundering heart. His eyes fogged over with resigned fear and he whispered to himself,

"Help me, Hiccup. Hurry!" If anyone ever saw him pleading like this, Toothless would be forever ashamed, but at that time he didn't care. His pride was put on the backburner as he thought about Hiccup and how he'd grieve so terribly for him. Hiccup was always so prone to emotional attachments in a way dragons shouldn't ever be. He'd be heartbroken if he ever learned that Toothless died on a pointless, routine, and relatively boring, raid. Toothless never thought he'd fall so hard for the little nonhuman, but Hiccup managed to worm his way into his heart. He cared if Hiccup was sad or lonely. Him. The Night's Fury. The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself, who was bound to no one and nothing, who was revered and renowned for his apparent lack of weakness, was attached to Hiccup. Who would've ever guessed Toothless would think about a human part dragon or not with his last moments alive? Toothless had found his weakness in the form of a dragon born of man, and he couldn't bring himself to care.

The crows cawed overhead and the sky bled pink with the setting sun before Hiccup found the shores of Berk. He'd taken Toothless' earlier advice and followed the ships with Berk's crest to find his way. As Hiccup stepped away from the waves and onto dry land, his body changed to look more human. Hiccup shivered and wrapped his arms around his torso. He always felt naked without his scales. Hiccup beheld the towering cliffs and spires of rock that made the little isle of Berk stand out among the rest. He felt tiny in the face of such natural splendor, but he didn't have time to bask in the feeling as he normally did. He had to find Toothless.

Hiccup hoped playing the part of shipwrecked boy washed up on foreign shores after a dragon raid would earn him a place to stay for the night. It usually worked, but sometimes it didn't. Humans were oddly wary of strangers sometimes.

Hiccup scraped himself along the sand banks to give him the scratches you'd find on a shipwreck survivor. He rolled around in the sand to look like he'd been lying there for a while. Then he picked himself up and trudged his way to the village. Hopefully the perpetually glassy-eyed look Hiccup had would give the impression that he had a concussion as well.

He stumbled convincingly through the streets until he caught the attention of a scruffy, barrel-chested Viking man with a hook for an arm and a peg leg. The man cursed in Norse and threw the rag he'd been using to polish an ax down before barreling out to help. Hiccup let his lips quirk up at how easy it was to pull this off before falling forward and letting himself slam into the dirt. The ground

was still covered in soot and ash from the recent raid, and Hiccup could catch a faint whiff of Nightfury napalm as well. Toothless was definitely there recently, but Hiccup knew that already.

The Viking cursed again and hoisted him up and over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. Hiccup wheezed as the air was knocked out of him and the Viking patted his back apologetically.

"Sorry about that, lad," He said quickly, "Don't know me own strength! Now stay awake for me will ye? Gotta get ye to the Gothi before ye keel over. Ye got some nasty scratches there."

Hiccup groaned and curled up over his aching stomach. He didn't even need to act for that bit. The Viking started running and shooing people out of the way as he took Hiccup to this 'Gothi' character. Probably a healer, if Hiccup had to guess.

"Name's Gobber, by the way. Where're ye from, if ye don't mind me asking?" Gobber asked curiously. He tried to keep up small talk so Hiccup didn't fall asleep. Apparently he looked more beat up than he thought. Hiccup opened his mouth to answer.

"Sailorâ€¦" He said weakly. That could mean any number of things, but Hiccup let Gobber draw his own conclusions from it. It was a useful tactic he'd learned in the port cities he visited sometimes.

"Ah, all over then. Gotcha." Gobber nodded and hummed comprehendingly, "Well then little sailor boy, what's yer name? You've got one, right? We're almost to the Gothi and I'd like to know who I'm carting around like a sack of beets!"

This would be a bit trickier. Hiccup had no shame in his name, but he didn't want the stigma attached to it hindering his plan. He didn't want to lie so early in the game, though, so Hiccup answered truthfully.

"'M Hiccup." He answered before going limp and feigning unconsciousness. Gobber cursed again, not focusing on Hiccup's name for the moment, and shook him awake.

"Come on, lad, we're almost there! Don't fall asleep now, ye might not wake up again!" he barked. Hiccup started awake, or at least seemed like it, and saw a lone hut lit up with torches come into view. A strange, tiny, old woman gripping a staff twice her size was waiting for them outside it. Gobber didn't seem to think this was strange; the Gothi always knew when she was needed.

The Gothi took one look at Hiccup and widened her eyes in shock. She could see the magic coiling around Hiccup and cloaking his true form. Hiccup could tell the Gothi was keen to magic forces and gave her a wide-eyed, pleading look not to say anything. The Gothi narrowed her eyes suspiciously, but said nothing. She ushered Gobber inside, motioned for him to lay Hiccup down on the cot used for the sick, and waved him away as soon as he did. Gobber did all of it without question and left Hiccup in her care.

Now that they were alone, the Gothi glared meaningfully at Hiccup. Her vow of silence forbade her from demanding what sort of trickery Hiccup was up to, but she didn't have to speak for Hiccup to know what she meant. Hiccup sighed and coaxed his scales to bloom along

his freckled skin. He had to show the Gothi what he was before she would listen to a word he said. Hiccup smiled unsurely at the Gothi and opened his stance to show he meant no harm.

"Now you see me with no barriers." He told her softly, "I hadn't planned on meeting a seiðkonur, but I suppose it can't be helped."

Seiðkonur, or 'magic seers,' were the only ones who could tell right away what Hiccup was. Anyone could become one if they trained hard enough and opened their minds to it, but the Gothi was one of the few who had a gift for it early on in life. Hiccup was warned to respect seiðkonur whenever he met one, lest they use their talent for magic to make his life difficult.

"I am Hiccup, Dragon Born of Man. I come here in search of my friend, the Night's Fury. I realize your kind are at war with the sky walkers, but I, and the sea dwellers bear you no grudge." Hiccup explained as formally as he could.

The Gothi rolled her eyes and hit him on the head with her staff. She never liked formalities. She told him as such by scribbling runes and drawing crude pictures in the dirt. Hiccup grinned at the old woman's audacity and relaxed a bit.

"Better safe than sorry, right?" He asked when she turned back to him, "So now with formality being thrown out the window, I guess it's safe to assume you're_not_ going to turn me in?"

The Gothi shrugged and wiggled her hand from side to side. The universal sign for 'maybe.' Hiccup nodded understandingly. He could work with that.

"Fair enough, I suppose." He hummed, "I promise to find my friend, check if he's alright, heal him if need be, and leave when I'm certain he'll live. If he's dead, well, I make no promises." Hiccup vowed he would destroy anyone who ever harmed Toothless. That promise to his dearest friend outweighed any promise he made to a seiðkonur.

The Gothi understood this and made a promise of her own. She drew pictures depicting what she would do to him if he broke his oath. She'd send the entirety of Berk's warriors after him if he even hinted at treachery or trickery beyond what he needed to find Toothless. She'd curse him and any children he may have "dragon or otherwise" if he stayed longer than he needed to. She'd destroy him herself if he harmed anyone in Berk directly or indirectly while he was there. Hiccup nodded to show he understood and agreed to the terms. With that, the Gothi waved Hiccup away. Hiccup wasn't actually injured and she had other things to do. Hiccup stood fluidly and exited the Gothi's hut with a small wave. With a minor truce established, Hiccup decided to focus his efforts on finding Toothless. He had to be here somewhere.

The Gothi frowned as Hiccup left. He struck her as familiar even before he revealed his true form to her. His eyes were too wide and too green. His hair was too long, even for a Viking, and smelled of saltwater and seaweed. It was left unbraided to flow freely in the wind (or water, her mind supplied her helpfully) in a way no respectable man would have it. Despite all these oddities separating

Hiccup from the rest, he still set off a nagging feeling that she should know him. And his name was familiar, too. Odd, perhaps, but familiar. Naming yourself after the babes too weak to function in society was a strange choice for a nonhuman to make, and it made her wonder.

Just who is Hiccup?

6. Chapter 5: Lost and Found

Hiccup made sure to stay out of sight while in the village. By now, most people were probably informed of his odd arrival and that he was supposedly injured. He didn't feel like explaining why he was out of the healer's hut while he was still injured, so it was best to stay hidden. He tiptoed through the shadows soundlessly; listening for any rumors or whispers of where Toothless might be. So far Hiccup wasn't having any luck. By the time he reached the edge of town, Hiccup was about ready to give up on finding anything useful and move on to searching the forests beyond.

But then he noticed a house perched on a hill overlooking the entire village. Hiccup had no idea what drew his gaze to the lonely hall on the edge of town, but he couldn't look away once he started staring. Perhaps it was because this particular house was so much bigger than the others, yet seemed emptier. Even from the outside Hiccup could tell it wasn't a busy hall that housed entire families. It was far too quiet for that. There was only one light on in the second story window to the left. Someone was home, but there was no activity he could see from where he was. The house was familiar somehow; like a distant memory of a dream he could barely hold onto upon waking. There was a banner hanging above the doorway with the family crest of whoever lived there.

The crest was intricately woven into a bright red dragon curling in on itself. It was howling in agony as a sword was driven into its mouth. The dragon seemed to be writhing in pain and his fire was split into two paths by the sword impaling its maw. It made Hiccup sick to look at it, but it also left a nagging feeling in the back of his mind. He'd seen this crest somewhere before.

If Hiccup had more time to dwell on his sudden feeling of déjà vu, he would have lingered a bit longer. As it was, Toothless could be trapped alone and scared (the big baby would never admit it, but that's dragon pride for you) with no way to hunt or defend himself. Hiccup could come back later if he really wanted to figure it out.

Hiccup expanded his search to the forest; well aware that night was fast approaching. Most people would've set up camp or gone back to the village to rest for the night, but Hiccup was able to navigate deep-sea darkness. Night time on the surface was nothing compared to that. The abundance of stars and the aid of the moon actually helped him see better.

Hiccup crept through the foliage on high alert. He knew just because Vikings would be sound asleep in their beds by now, didn't mean they were the only predators on the island. He made it all the way to a cluster of cliffs overlooking Berk before he ran into any trouble.

An old man with a half-crazed look in his eye came at him with a crooked staff. Insults flew from his mouth like spittle. Oh wait, the spittle wasn't a metaphor. Hiccup dodged out of the way of the old man's wild swings and got a better look at the man as he did. He was skinny and mean-looking; with wild grey hair and gold snaggleteeth. A sheep was baying angrily from the man's side and Hiccup took a moment to throw a look of audacity at the arrogant animal. It had some nerve to roar at a predator that could easily crush its neck in his jaws.

"Who are you and what are you doing on my property?" The old man demanded while shaking his walking stick in Hiccup's direction, "Are you a thief come to steal my cabbages? They've been going missing too often for it to be anything other than thievery! Well boy? Out with it! What're you doing here?"

Hiccup scanned the area and realized he'd stumbled into a cabbage patch. The old man must tend to it. Now that Hiccup was looking, he saw a rickety-looking house not too far away from where they were standing. Hiccup gave the old man an unimpressed look and held out his hands to show he meant no harm.

"Who would steal cabbages?" He asked honestly with boredom dripping from his voice.

"I dunno, boy! Maybe you would? It's not like the cabbages are just getting up and rolling away on their own! And I haven't seen anyone prowlin' around my property except for you, so you're the most likely suspect I've got!" The old man raved before sneering in disgust. The sheep baled in concern and the old man bent down to pet it lovingly. Hiccup scrunched his nose up in a mix of confusion and disgust before backing away from the odd sight.

"I don't know who's been in your cabbages, sir, but it wasn't me. I just got here this evening." Hiccup offered cautiously, "My name's Hiccup. I washed up on your shores after three days lost at sea. The dragons destroyed our ship and I was the only survivor to my knowledge."

That cover story was one he usually stuck with when in human settlements. It worked wonders if he was able to sell it right. Judging by the old man's scrutinizing glare and the way he looked Hiccup up and down thoughtfully, Hiccup figured he managed it. The old man nodded cautiously but grumbled a warning.

"Just be sure to stay out of my cabbages, boy. And stop sneakin' around at night! It's a sure way to get yourself in trouble." The old man waved him away and Hiccup was all too happy to leave him to his business. Just before he left earshot, Hiccup heard the man mutter,

"Stupid shipwreck rats sneakin' around at odd hours of the night. Thinkin' ol' Mildew can't see them rummaging through his cabbages, pah! Next they'll be raving about downing a nightfury like that half-wit Bucket! 'It landed somewhere near Raven's Point!' he says. Poor fool doesn't even know half his brain is gone some days!"

So the old man's name was Mildew? And he knew where Toothless was? Hiccup couldn't just let him go now that he was his only lead.

Thinking quickly, Hiccup decided to play the part of the curious foreigner.

"Who downed a nightfury?" Hiccup piped up before Mildew could get too far. The old man scoffed at Hiccup and sneered mockingly in his general direction.

"Oh don't mind any of that, boy. Bucket's the town half-wit who used to be a_real_ warrior before a nadder took out a good chunk of his brain. He's been rambling on about downing the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself since the raid three days ago." Mildew rolled his eyes heavenward and shook his head, "Should'a killed him while he was still sane." He muttered with a hint of pity beneath the mean-spirited words.

"Where did he say it fell?" Hiccup urged on eagerly, like a lad in a tavern listening to a hero's tale.

"Didn't you hear a word I said?" Mildew barked incredulously, "There is no nightfury, boy! But if you really want to take the word of a half-wit and go chasing fairytales, fine. Bucket mentioned something about Raven's Point before he was dragged off. It's over that way where the misty cliffs are."

"Thank you, sir! I'll be sure to mention you if I do manage to find the nightfury." No he wouldn't, but Mildew didn't need to know that.

"_If_ you find it." Mildew sneered before waving Hiccup away, "Now go on! I've had enough of you loitering around my property!"

Hiccup practically ran down the hill to get away from the crazy old man and his sheep. He would have to watch out for Mildew while he was staying on Berk. At least Hiccup had a lead to where Toothless was. If the man called Bucket's mumblings were even a little true, Toothless was sure to be nearby, and in very real danger. A downed dragon was a dead dragon, and Toothless would've been down for three days! Hiccup rushed the rest of the way off Mildew's property and began his search anew.

Hiccup searched high and low for Toothless all throughout the night. After his run-in with Mildew, Hiccup hadn't had any other problems. He made it to Raven's Point easily enough, but then he realized how large the area was. Hiccup sighed and hoped Toothless appreciated him. He looked under every rock, inside every hollow log, up in the branches of every tree, and even in the deepest parts of the bog. Hiccup had never felt so dirty after swimming before, but Berk's bogs were ridiculously muddy. Hiccup _really_ hoped Toothless appreciated him.

He would've stopped his search as soon as the morning mist began to settle in, but Hiccup's dumb luck was with him that day. In a moment of bratty petulance, Hiccup smacked a branch out of his way, only for it to swing back and smack him in the face. As he glared sourly at the broken branch, he spotted something when the sun shone brightly through the mist. A trail had been highlighted for Hiccup in the mist. Something large definitely hit the ground at very high speeds and tumbled gracelessly somewhere nearby. Branches and tree bark were broken in one consistent direction. The ground was split and scarred with dirt that was dug up in a way that wasn't natural. This was it.

Toothless was down there (or he was at some point) and Hiccup could find him easily.

"Toothless!" Hiccup called out, "Toothless it's Hiccup! Answer me if you can!"

For a moment, all was still and quiet. Then, slowly, a rumbling roar answered Hiccup's call. Hiccup laughed in excitement and triumph before calling out again.

"Where are you, bud?" He asked as he scrambled down the ravine. Toothless answered with another, wordless roar. Hiccup huffed indignantly and shouted,

"Yeah, yeah, I know you're alive, but whereâ€"!" Hiccup stopped short when he saw why Toothless couldn't speak. Toothless' maw was tied shut with the ropes of a bola. His entire, majestic body was tangled in a web of hemp and braided wool. Hiccup's wide eyes widened even further when he spotted Toothless' bloody, half-missing, stump where his tailfin used to be. Thankfully the ropes had been tight enough to stop the bleeding, but that just created a whole other problem. Hiccup fell to his knees before Toothless's nearly-blue tail and quickly severed the ropes binding them tight. He would've completely cut Toothless free, but he knew what he was about to do would hurt like the fires of Muspelheim.

"Okay Toothless, youâ€"you just stay still okay? Your tail is bluer than the water from the rockpools, you understand? I'm gonna try and get the blood flowing again, but it's gonna hurt. A lot." Hiccup warned Toothless without waiting for a reply. It was a good thing Hiccup left the ropes on his mouth where they were, because as soon as Hiccup started kneading and smacking Toothless' tail, he started screaming. It took an hour and thirty minutes of agonizing pain and gut-wrenching screams before Toothless' tail started to look normal again. Blood started oozing from the wound where his tailfin used to be, but it wasn't nearly enough to worry about.

Finally, Hiccup cut away the rest of the ropes tying Toothless down. As soon as his forelegs were free, Toothless pounced on Hiccup and roared indignantly in his face. Hiccup blinked once, stupefied, but then hissed like an offended cat.

"Stop whining, you big baby! I help you keep the rest of your tail and you thank me by screaming like a cornered thunderdrum? Shame on you!" Hiccup snapped.

Toothless bowed his head; knowing Hiccup was right. He flopped down on his side; too exhausted to do much else. Toothless panted for breath like a horse that just ran a taxing race. Hiccup saw him struggling even to open his mouth, so his eyes softened understandingly. Hiccup nuzzled his cheek against Toothless' broad neck and sighed into his ear.

"It's been a long three days, hasn't it bud? You rest here for a while and I'll go hunt some food." Hiccup's unspoken truce was heard loud and clear. They were both tired and Toothless was scared from coming near death for the first time in his life. Hiccup couldn't begrudge Toothless for his rudeness, but he'd need some rest himself before he was willing to admit it. Hiccup would hear his apology and accept it when he wasn't about to keel over from hunger and his tail

wasn't in danger of falling off. Hopefully a little food in their bellies would sooth their frazzled nerves.

((I would just like to end this chapter by addressing Mildew's use of the term half-wit. First of all, Mildew's an asshole and a crotchety old man. He's like the racist old person that has to make their displeasure known in every family. He's not going to care if something's politically correct when talking shit about someone. Second of all, Mildew's pity for Bucket and his hopes that they killed him quickly stems from the Viking mentality of 'die with honor over living in shame.' In his own, twisted little way, Mildew actually wanted Bucket to die with dignity in the heat of battle and not have to live with half his brain missing. Basically Mildew is an albiest old man and everyone know's he's a dick.))

End
file.